## Gwyneth Walker

# New Millennium Suite <br> for Chorus with Brass Quintet, Percussion and Piano 

I. "Sinner Man"<br>II. "Peace, I Ask of Thee, O River"<br>III. "Down by the Riverside"

commissioned for The Manatee Millennium Fest - December 31, 1999 by the Fine Arts Music Series of the First United Methodist Church - Bradenton, FL James Hawkinson, Music Director
premiered by The Sarasota Pops Orchestra and the Millennium Fest Chorus Patricia Stenberg, Music Director

Duration: 14 minutes

## Program Notes

New Millennium Suite is a set of three songs for chorus and orchestra (now scored for brass and percussion). The Suite was commissioned by the community of Bradenton, FL to celebrate the arrival of the year 2000. The performers for the premiere were the Sarasota Pops Orchestra and the combined school and church choirs of the Bradenton area of Manatee County, FL.

These are traditional American songs. They have been updated with additional lyrics. Audience participation is featured. The intent is to provide music which is both familiar and new, reverent and fun.

The set opens with a celebratory (New Millennium) introduction leading into the first song, "Sinner Man" ("O, sinner man, where you gonna run to?"). A special "run!" motif is introduced by the chorus, spoken softly, then growing increasingly loud and insistent. The audience joins in, exhorting the sinner to flee for his life! This is energetic music.

The second song, "Peace, I Ask of Thee, O River," has a flowing accompaniment. These arpeggio patterns provide an undercurrent to the chorus singing "Peace like the falling rain, like the floating cloud, like the flowing stream, like the gentle breeze..." The chorus sustains pitches, while the river ripples beneath. This is a gentle song.
"Down by the Riverside" closes the set. The song is presented in a swing rhythm. Brass and percussion are featured. Near the end, the meter becomes free as the chorus sings "Gonna lay down my burden, gonna lay it down, gonna lay it down..." The players and the audience, perhaps growing impatient to participate (!), ask the chorus "Where? Where?" The answer, of course, is "Down by the Riverside!"

Dr. Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947) is a graduate of Brown University and the Hartt School of Music. She holds B.A., M.M. and D.M.A. Degrees in Music Composition. A former faculty member of the Oberlin College Conservatory, she resigned from academic employment in 1982 in order to pursue a career as a full-time composer. She now lives on a dairy farm in Braintree, Vermont.

Gwyneth Walker is a proud resident of Vermont. She is the recipient of the Year 2000 "Lifetime Achievement Award" from the Vermont Arts Council. Walker's catalog includes over 160 commissioned works for orchestra, band, chorus and chamber ensembles. The music of Gwyneth Walker is published by E. C. Schirmer of Boston (choral and vocal music) and MMB Music of St. Louis (orchestral and instrumental music).

## New Millennium Suite

for SATB Chorus (divisi), Brass Quintet, Percussion and Piano
Traditional American

1. Sinner Man

Gwyneth Walker




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* During the performance of the "Run, Run!" sections (letters $\mathbf{D}, \mathbf{H}$, and $\mathbf{L}$ ), the audience may join in with the chorus. The conductor may wish to explain this participation, and perhaps rehearse the audience in advance.




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## 2. Peace I Ask of Thee, O River





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Ted

3. Down by the Riverside






Tpts.
Per.



$\%$


B At a strutting tempo $d=120$ (perhaps conducted in 2 )

Pno.


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[^1]
[^0]:    Red. ad lib.

[^1]:    * flutter tongue or trill

